

sparqs National Conference 2015: Workshop and Presentation Outlines

Workshop Session 1: 10.30 – 11.30

Workshop 1.1: Student Partnership in First Year curriculum design – positives and pitfalls	
Facilitated by: Lisa Gaughan, University of Lincoln Dr Kirsty Miller, University of Lincoln	Student partnership in curriculum design enables students to play an active role in shaping and enhancing their learning. Both the School of Psychology and the School of Fine & Performing Arts at the University of Lincoln have undertaken projects to redesign the curriculum for first year students. This workshop will explore the processes, findings and challenges from both schools. It will also look at the development of a possible toolkit for student partnership in curriculum re-design.
Workshop 1.2: Working together to achieve student-friendly feedback	
Full title: Working together to achieve student-friendly feedback – examples from the Scottish Higher Education sector Facilitated by: Val Innes, QAA Scotland Amanda Park, QAA Scotland Heather Gibson, QAA Scotland Paul Greene, The Robert Gordon University Union	Recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) activity has indicated that many students’ associations have run or been partners in major institutional projects that aim to enhance assessment and feedback policy and practice. This workshop aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share what is currently happening in the University sector around good practice in feedback on assessment. - Identify ways institutions and students’ associations can support student-friendly feedback on assessment. - Provide an opportunity for participants to contribute ideas to the debate, explore good practice in this area and learn from each other.
Workshop 1.3: The Future of student engagement in the college review process	
Facilitated by: Margaret Rose Livingstone, Education Scotland Hannah Clarke, sparqs	Education Scotland is the national agency responsible for supporting quality and enhancement in learning and teaching in Scotland’s Colleges. This workshop will explore students’ role in the college review process, discuss what meaningful student engagement could look like and identify areas for development. Participants will also have an opportunity to discuss how students’ associations might be more involved in evaluating college quality.

Workshop 1.4: Imagine Tomorrow	
Facilitated by: Robert Foster, NUS Scotland	NUS Scotland campaigns for better student support and a better student experience both in terms of learning and teaching and wider society. Imagine Tomorrow is a two year project which has explored what students would like education in Scotland to look like, and what needs it should meet in the future. The workshop will explore the key themes that have emerged from Imagine Tomorrow's work, what policy areas NUS Scotland will be focusing on in the coming years.
Workshop 1.5: Engaging students to embed equality and diversity in the curriculum	
Facilitated by: Stephanie Miller, sparqs Dash Sekhar, Edinburgh University Students' Association	sparqs and the Higher Education Academy have been working together to involve students in the design of curricula that embeds equality and diversity. This workshop will explore the rationale for this and present the frameworks and tools that can support the development of an inclusive curriculum. Case studies of student-led projects will be discussed. Participants will consider opportunities for partnership working with students to develop projects.
Workshop 1.6: Using data to support students' associations	
Facilitated by: Phil McGuinness, sparqs	This workshop will detail the work carried out by sparqs on data within the college sector. Ranging from students' association work promoting and engaging with data from the Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey, to our work supporting apprentices with data and technology. Participants will be able to explore innovative ways in which students' associations can utilise data, how to work around issues like survey fatigue, and share practice across the sector.
Workshop 1.7: GCU Engage: Student staff partnerships in policy and practice	
Facilitated by: Dr Nicola Andrew, Lesley McAleavy, Glasgow Caledonian University Michael Stephenson, John Gaughan, Glasgow Caledonian University SA	In 2014, Glasgow Caledonian University established GCU Engage, a partnership between the Students' Association and the University. This initiative is the outcome of the work of a team of students, academics and professional support staff working collaboratively, over a period of two years to develop an institutional level approach to student engagement and partnership working. It is one that acknowledges students as co-producers and co-creators and not just the 'end stage' recipients of knowledge. This workshop will explore undergraduate student engagement in Colleges and Universities from both a student and staff perspective.

Presentation Session 1: 12.00 – 13.00

Some of these sessions comprise of 2 or 3 presentations which complement one another.

Presentation 1.1: Assessment criteria with consensus are authentic / Rethinking peer, rethinking review	
<p>(a) Assessment criteria with consensus are authentic: students as partners in assessment grading and feedback</p> <p>Presented by: Abertay Psychology Student Presentation Team: Lizzie Lerpinière and Connor Gibson, assisted by Dr Siobhan MacAndrew, Abertay University, Dundee</p>	<p>Abertay University report on their experience in assessment of a third year psychology module wherein students devised and contextualised assessment criteria to supplement Grademark* and their institution's standard attainment descriptors. The presentation will demonstrate the many advantages and the very few disadvantages of this approach and illustrate their talk with filmed and written data from students in the class.</p> <p><small>* Grademark - electronic marking comments via Turnitin/Blackboard</small></p>
<p>(b) Rethinking peer, rethinking review: students' collaboration in the review of teaching practices</p> <p>Presented by: Jenny Scoles and Kelda Sinclair, Napier University</p>	<p>This innovative pilot project, <i>Students as Colleagues in the Review of Teaching Practices</i>, positions Edinburgh Napier students at the heart of an evaluative intervention. The project invited students to volunteer as colleagues in evaluating teaching practices and the student learning experience. Their presentation outlines this student-led initiative in more detail before discussing personal reflections about the project's feasibility and effectiveness.</p>
Presentation 1.2: Faculty level representation in colleges	
<p>(a) Faculty councils at Borders College</p> <p>Presented by: Amy Hamilton and Helen Chisholm, Borders College</p>	<p>This presentation will outline the college's Faculty Council structure which has been recognised as excellent practice by Education Scotland. It will demonstrate the impact of Faculty Councils on driving educational change at Borders College, and provide information to enable other institutions to replicate this model. A short promotional video will also be shown which illustrates the purpose of the Students Association to both staff and students at Borders College.</p>
<p>(b) Finger on the pulse: a City of Glasgow representation initiative</p> <p>Presented by: Gavin Quinn, City of Glasgow College</p>	<p>A review of the class rep system at City of Glasgow College has resulted in a more focused approach to working with faculties. They have introduced faculty reps across the college which has resulted in more engagement on significant learning and teaching issues. This presentation will outline the changes made and the positive changes made for students.</p>

Presentation 1.3: School representation initiatives

<p>(a) School representative initiatives: creating additional opportunities for student reps to engage with strategic agendas whilst creating a representative pathway</p> <p>Presented by: Greig Kelbie, Napier Students' Association</p>	<p>NSA is committed to the continued strengthening of their representative system and have allocated resource (with support from University strategic funding investment) to develop additional representative opportunities.</p> <p>School Reps were introduced in 2013 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• bridge the gap between programmes and Faculties• work with academic partners as a link between programme representatives, academic staff and NSA• engage with strategic agendas• undertake projects• contribute to the academic excellence agenda
<p>(b) GCU School Conferences: a picture of School specific engagement across GCU</p> <p>Presented by: John Gaughan, GCU Students' Association</p>	<p>GCU Students' Association has had great success in getting their three Schools to commit to School specific engagement conferences during this academic session.</p> <p>The presentation will cover the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School specific conference overview and engagement topics covered.• Student involvement in the planning of the conference.• Conference feedback from students and staff of the separate school.• Long term benefits
<p>(c) Edinburgh University: Developing course rep engagement through institutional partnership</p> <p>Presented by: Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka, Edinburgh University Students' Association</p>	<p>EUSA has seen a huge increase this year in Class Rep engagement, with training and events run throughout the year. They believe that developing a partnership with the university at a school level has been crucial to this. EUSA staff and the Vice President Academic Affairs met with senior management of many of the schools, encouraging them to host a meeting for all Reps in their school. These meetings introduced key school contacts to Class Reps and also recognised and thanked them for taking on this leadership position. Many schools held such events with over 80% of Reps attending.</p>

Presentation 1.4: Partnership Agreements in colleges and universities	
<p>(a) Partnerships in real life – how do they actually work?</p> <p>Presented by: Conor Murray-Gauld, Edinburgh College SA</p>	<p>Partnership Agreements are the beginning of a process to develop a balanced and equal relationship between the students’ association and the college. This presentation will outline the process and show what “Partnership” actually means for a genuinely autonomous College Students’ Association and its college.</p>
<p>(b) Working in partnership to enhance the student experience.</p> <p>Presented by: Kirsty Campbell, The Robert Gordon University</p>	<p>RGU’s institutional strategy <i>A Clear Future: For a leading University in a new era</i>, has a specific strategic aim to ‘Support students and graduates to enjoy, and prosper within, a vibrant learning community’. By working together in partnership, students and members of staff - at all levels – play a role in creating this community. Individually, and collectively, students continue to help shape and change the learning experience within the university. In recognition of this last session the university and RGU: Union developed a new <i>Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)</i>.</p>
Presentation 1.5: The student voice in Aotearoa New Zealand	
<p>Full title: The student voice in Aotearoa New Zealand: the state of play and the context we face</p> <p>Presented by Dr Alistair Shaw, New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations Co-authored by Nicholas Huntington, Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence</p>	<p>This presentation will describe New Zealand’s student voice ‘landscape’, and discuss current work led by the New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations (NZUSA) and Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning, that supports organisations’ effective use of that voice.</p> <p>This presentation will outline New Zealand’s tertiary education landscape and summarise trends within that system, before discussing the challenges and opportunities for use of the student voice raised by the current environment and recent policy changes. It will then outline findings from the joint work by NZUSA and Ako Aotearoa on the student voice in New Zealand, and future work areas identified as a result.</p>
Presentation 1.6: Apprentice Engagement: from the local to the national	
<p>Presented by: Phil McGuinness, Stephanie Millar, sparqs Robert Foster, NUS Scotland Liam Ennis, National Society of Apprentices Scotland</p>	<p>This workshop will explore the work of sparqs and NUS in engaging apprentices in college, in the workplace, and in a national setting. Participants will be given the opportunity to find out more about the work of the National Society of Apprentices, to explore ways to engage apprentices at all levels, and to share practice.</p>

Presentation 1.7: How to enhance representation

Full title: Innovation in the use of the Institutional Associate Trainer Scheme – how to enhance representation - the view from Queen Margaret University and the University of the West of Scotland

Presented by:

Cecile Guilloteau, Queen Margaret University
Claire Lumsden, University of the West of Scotland

The Student Representation Assistant (SRA) position at QMU is a development of the sparqs Institutional Associate Trainers (IAT) scheme. The Students' Union first took part in the IAT scheme in 2013-2014 and extended it to the SRA role in 2014-2015. It was felt that this resource could be optimised to improve student engagement and enhance the student learning experience. The initiative has had a positive impact on students' engagement with their academic experience and on the university. From giving talks during induction week and delivering training, to running stalls and featuring in a video, the SRAs have supported student engagement all year round.

UWS and SAUWS have taken part in the IAT scheme since AY 12-13, which has been extremely successful as evidenced in the increase in training satisfaction rates. Alongside the IAT scheme, there are also Student Fellows who look at specific areas of the student experience and student feedback with a view to improving areas of concern. They are now in the process of merging these two positions to make them more effective.

They believe that Student Fellows (who are School based) will be more effective if they are able to train and develop reps within their School to ensure that activities are aimed at areas which require additional attention and resources. They will not only train Reps but will also engage with the School Boards to ensure that all feedback (positive and areas for improvement) is followed up and disseminated appropriately. The fellows will also act as a point of contact for reps when developing School or Programme based campaigns.

Workshop Session 2: 14.45 – 15.45

Workshop 2.1: Students supporting students in the journey from college to university	
<p>Facilitated by: Liz Gunn, Edinburgh and Lothian's Regional Articulation Hub (ELRAH) Gabriel Kemp, student at Edinburgh Napier University David McKay, student at Heriot Watt University</p>	<p>The number of students articulating into university has grown steadily over the last decade and is now a key feature of the national widening participation strategy. The development of these articulation routes has been the focus of the five regional articulation hubs, of which ELRAH (Edinburgh and Lothian's Regional Articulation Hub) is one. However, until early 2014, there was almost no student representation in the decision-making processes around this activity. Recognising this deficit, ELRAH and sparqs decided to build a strategic partnership which would secure a place for the student voice in the work of the articulation hub and develop models of representation to facilitate student participation. This workshop will show participants how the model has developed and give practical guidance on how to develop similar representative partnerships in their own areas of work.</p>
Workshop 2.2: Supporting student partnerships	
<p>Full title: Supporting student partnerships in enhancing plans through engaging with initiatives and resources developed by the Jisc Change Agents' Network</p> <p>Facilitated by: Dr Peter Chatterton, Jisc Change Agents' Network Steering Group Dr Mark Kerrigan, Anglia Ruskin University Simon Walker, University of Greenwich</p>	<p>The Change Agents' Network (CAN) is a network of staff and students working in partnership, developed and funded by Jisc to support curriculum enhancement and innovation. The workshop will commence by introducing the Change Agents' Network with a particular focus on the SEDA Change Leader Award, the Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change and resources, toolkits, effective practice guides and case studies. Participants will then be invited to join one of two groups to explore particular initiatives in more detail and discuss with the facilitator how they can utilise and contextualise the initiatives and resources to suit their needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: The Change Leader Award and the Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change. • Group 2: Resources, toolkit, effective practice guides and case studies. <p>Participants will be asked to identify one key action. The workshop will finish with feedback about actions and discussions about how CAN initiatives and resources can complement the work of sparqs.</p>
Workshop 2.3: Sustainability and the curriculum	
<p>Full title: Sustainability and the curriculum: why does it matter and what can YOU do?</p> <p>Facilitated by: Alex Henderson, NUS Scotland Kim Croasdale, NUS UK</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to enable you to gain an understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), explore its growing importance and why it matters to your students, students' associations and institutions. It will highlight examples of where ESD already exists in the sector, in the formal, informal and 'subliminal' curriculum and highlight different approaches and processes to moving this agenda forward generally and within your institution. This workshop will also help attendees identify examples within their own institution and explore the roles of specific individuals to facilitate change.</p>

Workshop 2.4: Student delivery of staff development in practice	
<p>Full title: Student delivery of staff development in practice – perspectives from a college and university students’ associations</p> <p>Facilitated by: Michelle Bingham, South Lanarkshire SA Jules Fitzgerald, New College Lanarkshire SA John Gaughan, Glasgow Caledonian University SA</p>	<p>Independently of each other, Glasgow Caledonian University Students’ Association and the Students’ Associations of New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire College identified an opportunity to deliver student led training to develop staff/student working relationships. The workshop will showcase both training sessions and share with participants the opportunities and successes of student led delivery, but also lessons learned from the process. Participants will be able to explore possible student led sessions for their own institutions.</p>
Workshop 2.5: But what does it mean for ME?	
<p>Full title: But what does it mean for ME? Students’ engagement with learning technologies: an exploration of their current satisfaction with and aspirations for learning technology at Abertay University, Dundee</p> <p>Facilitated by: Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement Student Research Team: Connor Gibson and Lizzie Lerpinière, assisted by Dr Siobhan MacAndrew, Abertay University</p>	<p>This student-led research project examined students’ current use and understanding of learning technologies and solicited their advice for our future development of technologically based teaching and learning tools. The project was funded by Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund.</p> <p>This workshop will explore how we will use this research data to continue to collaborate with students as to the best blend of VLE content, online and face-to-face activity.</p>
Workshop 2.6: Peer Assisted Learning	
<p>Full title: Peer Assisted Learning at Edinburgh University Students’ Association and University of Aberdeen</p> <p>Facilitated by: Katie Scott, Edinburgh University Students’ Association Dr. Emily Nordmann, University of Aberdeen Gabi Lipan, University of Aberdeen</p>	<p>Peer support began as a joint venture between EUSA and the University of Edinburgh in 2012/13 and is an established strand of the Student Experience Project which is run by students for students. They have been widely developing this project and now have 60 Peer Support Projects run by 500 student volunteers with 33% of undergraduates involved across the university. The University of Aberdeen will present the details of a PAL initiative that runs across the degree programme in the School of Psychology. It will focus on the practicalities of setting up such a scheme, potential pitfalls, how to maximise student involvement, use of social media, and present the results of a survey investigating the benefits of PAL for both the student attendees and the PAL leaders. This interactive workshop will give participants the opportunity to experience a mock PAL session and ask questions and discuss key concepts.</p>

Presentation Session 2: 15.45 – 16.15

Presentation 2.1: Benchmarking for improvement	
<p>Full title: Benchmarking for improvement: an introduction to NUS UK’s resources for improving the academic experience</p> <p>Presented by: Kate Little, NUS UK</p>	<p>NUS UK has developed four benchmarking tools aimed at starting a dialogue between staff and students on enhancing different aspects of the academic experience: assessment and feedback, organisation and management, learning resources and academic support. In the presentation you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain knowledge about NUS’s learning and teaching benchmarking tools. • Benchmark your course, department or institution in one or more areas. • Explore how national resources can be used and adapted to further curriculum enhancement in partnership between staff and students.
Presentation 2.2: Students as partners in the co-production of University Care Leavers policy and activities	
<p>Full title: Strathclyde Cares: students as partners in the co-production of University Care Leavers policy and activities</p> <p>Presented by: Stephanie McKendry, University of Strathclyde Louise Martin, University of Strathclyde</p>	<p>Recent research by MCR Pathways suggests that just 2% of care leavers enter Higher Education. According to the Scottish Government (2014), within Scotland, those from care backgrounds tend to leave school earlier (80% leaving at 16 or younger compared to 30% of the general Scottish population) have fewer qualifications, less attendance and higher risk of exclusion. Whilst the number of entrants to university has improved in recent years, retention remains a challenge.</p> <p>This presentation will discuss Strathclyde’s approach to corporate parenting and their aim of listening to care leavers. As well as playing an integral part in the formal University Committee responsible for care leaver applicants and students, students are actively engaged in the development of their corporate parenting strategy and Strathclyde Cares, a strand of scholarships, mentoring and peer support.</p>
Presentation 2.3: Embedding and sustaining creative disruption	
<p>Full title: Embedding and sustaining creative disruption: identity and impact in learning in partnership</p> <p>Presented by: Gordon Heggie & Neil McPherson, University of the West of Scotland Kety Faina & Jade McCarroll, students at University of the West of Scotland</p>	<p>This presentation will be delivered by a staff/student partnership team and will introduce a flexible, inclusive and sustainable model of partnership learning. It will argue that when learners are empowered as pedagogic consultants and active partners in learning, traditional educational hierarchies are dismantled, staff/student relations reconfigured and sustainable learning communities, underpinned by mutual respect and trust, created. Developing such communities requires a radical re-conceptualisation of higher education, one which embeds a culture of partnership and instils a sense of shared ownership that empowers students as the 'co-producers' of their university experience.</p>

Presentation 2.4: Challenges and benefits of student involvement in quality processes	
<p>Presented by: Hermina Pika Radmilovič, University of Maribor, Slovenia Co-authored by Rok Hržič, University of Maribor, Slovenia</p>	<p>The University of Maribor Students' Council, led by the student Vice-Rector has an important role, particularly in the development of university quality systems and processes. This means that students have influence on decision-making at the highest level within the University. Student representation also operates at the faculty level with the establishment of the position of student Vice-Dean. The central role of students is crucial in teaching, learning, assessment and quality. The presentation will introduce the key role of students in this process illustrated by a range of examples.</p>
Presentation 2.5: Enhance your Learning and Teaching Experience	
<p>Full title: ELATE: Enhance your Learning and Teaching Experience at Glasgow Clyde College</p> <p>Presented by: Barclay McCrindle, Glasgow Clyde College Students' Association</p>	<p>This presentation will outline an innovation at Glasgow Clyde College to engage students in the enhancement of learning and teaching. The student-led ELATE group which has representation from students and staff at the college identifies and implements effective and innovative approaches to learning and teaching. It is designed to explore and implement different ways of enhancing the student learning experience.</p>
Presentation 2.6: Post Graduate Taught engagement	
<p>Full title: Post Graduate Taught engagement – the outcomes of a sparqs consultation</p> <p>Presented by: Stephanie Miller, sparqs Sophie McCallum, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p>sparqs recently consulted with students over what a Post- Graduate Student experience could look like and what support institutions might need to put in place. This presentation will cover what was learned during the consultation, the PGT Student Learning Experience and explore how universities can develop their own PGT engagement.</p>